

# Zero Beat



Our 54<sup>th</sup> Year

A Publication of the Hampden County Radio Association

January, 2000

★★★★★ FCC ANNOUNCES ★★★★★  
AMATEUR RADIO RESTRUCTURING  
13 & 20 WPM Code Tests, and Novice, Tech+, and Advanced License Classes  
To Be a Thing Of The Past.  
See Page 5 "ARRL Bulletin"

Join Us on Friday, January 7<sup>th</sup> for a talk  
With David Patton, NT1N  
Doors Open at 7:PM Meeting starts at 7:30

I was first licensed 23 years ago as WD9DCL at age 12. I have developed a great interest in DXing and contesting that has driven most of my life's decisions, HI. I joined the Navy in 1982 instead of going to college because I wanted to be DX. When I got out of the Navy I knew I wanted to college because I now understood just how hard I had to work! I attended Western Illinois University because it was only and hour and a half drive to K4VX's huge station in Hannibal Missouri where I really learned to operate big gun stations. I have a Masters Degree in Geography thanks to my great interest in DX and maps and travel.

I have also held a lot of callsigns: After DCL I became KJ9W, AH2U, NU9R, WOOG, AA9AK, WX3N, KW9KW, W9QA, and now NT1N. Some of my Dxpeditions have included: KJ9W/KH2, /DU2, /KH6, 8Q7WQ, KC6KW, WX3N/VR2, WX3N/HD8, WX3N/HD1, AA9AK/VS6, VA9DH, 6Y4A, 6Y2A, VS6WO, 4M7X, NT1N/YV7, AA9AK/WHO, ...

I work for the ARRL as a Special Assistant to the Exec VP, and moved here last May. I have 20 acres on top of a hill and so far about 400 feet of tower ready to go up next summer including a 140 foot rotating tower.

I was one of the US Team captains (K5ZD was my teammate) at the World Radiosport Team Championship in 1996 at San Francisco. I edited the National Contest Journal for a year in 1997.

73, *Dave, NT1N*

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# *From the President's Shack* de W6IS

I hope all of you enjoyed your holiday time. Lets hope the year 2000 brings everyone happiness and good health.

I would like to comment on a recent article I read in CQ magazine. In a number foreign countries the leadership of organizations which are the equivalent of our ARRL were interviewed on the status of AMATEUR RADIO in their country. It seemed incredibly amazing to me that just about all the remarks were the same. The number of hams is down. As to the number of people being enticed into the hobby, young or old... the answers seem to be unanimously down. As I read down the list of countries the solutions for getting more newcomers into our wonderful hobby is to lower the code requirement. Perhaps this will help only time will tell, I certainly hope so. But I think it will take a lot more. I believe that things would be better if currently licensed hams that are not active on the bands or active anywhere would get on the air.

Support your local clubs and organizations. After all, these groups are the first line of defense in protecting our frequencies and hobby. Please do not sit back and leave it to someone else. It will take all of us to keep the hobby going. Remember enthusiasm draws crowds. You can start by taking a small step. Come down to the next HCRA club meeting. I invite a potential member and anyone who might be interested in becoming a ham.

Larry, K1ILZ, HCRA membership director, is offering an incentive for you to do just that. Five free raffle tickets for any member that brings a potential member and five free tickets to that person if they join.

A few recipients of this month's Zero Beat may not be club members. If you are one of these people please note it was sent to you as an invitation to our club meeting. Please take the time to spend a Friday evening with us, and I am quite certain you will have an enjoyable evening with your fellow hams.

I hope to C U all at the next meeting. We have an excellent guest speaker, super raffle prizes and above all fellowship and friendship.

*73 de Irv, W6IS*

## **HCRA HOLIDAY POT LUCK DINNER**

The officers and directors of the HCRA would like to thank all of you that attended the Pot Luck Dinner at last month's meeting, and made it a huge success. The dinner was very well attended and the food was delicious and plentiful. The evening was highlighted by a very entertaining slide presentation on their recent motor trip to Alaska by Yorke and Betty Phillips.

Congratulations to all the door prize winners and we hope you enjoy your prizes.

Special thanks to Betty, Pat and Marilyn for all their work in setting up the church shopping and putting everything together.

I enjoyed the company as well as the food had a great time and I am sure all that attended did to.

73 de Irv, W6IS

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#### EMERGENCY COORDINATOR

Emergency Coordinator    Dave Isham, KB1MU

**Please remember to join our Monday evening 10m Net**

Join NCS Tom, N1MUV, On Monday nights, 7:30PM local  
for the *HCRA/W1NY 10m Net*

**28.375 +/- QRM**

with 10m opening daily, who knows what DX may check in to our  
10m net!!! DX or not, you'll still be treated to information and good conversation.

More and more people are joining into our Monday night chat sessions.

Come in and discuss whatever is on your mind!!!

How do you feel about the FCC License restructuring? How was the last HCRA meeting?



# DX Clips

de  
Jordy, W1JK

I want to wish all a happy Holiday season and a healthy/happy New Year.

This month I will discuss the important role that some knowledge of a foreign language can play in giving you the edge in working DX. This is particularly true of French speaking countries. The French are probably the most appreciative of all when you speak their language. This is most likely due to the fact that the French, with some exceptions, are the least proficient in English. They love to converse in French.

Think about it -- if you speak German to a German he will most likely ignore it and respond in English. It has been my experience that the Spanish response is usually similar. Their response tells you that we don't need you to speak our language - our English is quite good and we proudly express ourselves in English.

Keep in mind that there are many "rare" DX stations manned by French hams, particularly in Oceania. I have personally observed rare DX stations with a French Op about to go QRT and ignoring the panting, desperate calls of USA hams - only to come back to an enterprising ham from Canada or wherever, calling him in French and asking him for a quick QSO.

I do not qualify as a linguist - in fact my language skills are limited to a few common phrases. (I took Spanish & German in school). Learn some communication type talk. Get yourself an English - French dictionary, or, if you like gadgets, get one of those relatively inexpensive language conversion hand-held calculators. I guarantee you that if you call a Frenchman (on a rare DX location) in French you'll get through a lot faster. I am convinced they listen first for French speaking stations. Of course, the same technique will work for the Italians, Spanish, Portuguese, and Germans - just not as well. There are also a few guys who advertise ham handbooks in QST and on the Internet that are complete with special ham lingo - even tapes to aid in pronunciation.

When you win the friendship of a French ham you will be amazed at the DX info he will pass on to you--unsolicited. He has friends in rare places and knows their operating schedules. Remember there are many rare French speaking countries around the world - a prime example is Africa. If you are lucky your new found French friend may even set you up with a sched for a rare one - heck - he could even be the QSL mgr & invite you to join them after their weekly meetings on the air to collect QSL data.

Good luck "Mon ami".



## LOOK FOR:

**Swaziland** - 3DA0 - Andre , ZS5WPX is QRV as 3DA0WPX on 20,15&10M SSB.QSL to home call.

**Tanzania** - 5H- John , IN3GNY is QRV as 5H3MG until 1/15 on SSB & RTTY. QSL via IN3YYQ.

**Nepal** - 9N - Lawrence , W8NRB is QRV as 9N7RB mostly on 20 & 10M SSB. QSL home call.

**Tonga** -A3 - Paul , A35RK QRV on 30 & 10M.

**Macquarie Island** - VK0 - Alan has said that he will be going QRT on 12/31/99. He is upset with the complaints about his operation. Your last and only chance to work him will be on 12/28 at 0900 - 1100Z CW only: T = 14026 ; R = 14031.

**Minami Torishima** - JD1 - Shiro , JD1BIC is active as JD1BIC/JD1 on 17 & 10M CW after 2200Z. QSL JARL bureau.

**Albania** - ZA - Stan , OK1JR is there now & will be active on 160 - 2M late afternoon & evenings his time. QSL home call.

See you next month.

de Jordy Koltz, W1JK, W1JK@MAP.COM



## AMATEUR RESTRUCTURING IS HERE: THREE LICENSE CLASSES, ONE CODE SPEED

**NEWINGTON, CT, Dec 30, 1999**--Amateur Radio will get a new look in the new millennium. The FCC today issued its long-awaited Report and Order in the 1998 Biennial Regulatory Review of Part 97--more commonly known as "license restructuring." The bottom line is that starting April 15, 2000, there will be three license classes--Technician, General, and Amateur Extra--and a single Morse code requirement--5 WPM.

"We believe that an individual's ability to demonstrate increased Morse code proficiency is not necessarily indicative of that individual's ability to contribute to the advancement of the radio art," the FCC said.

Besides drastically streamlining the Amateur Radio licensing process, the FCC said its actions would "eliminate unnecessary requirements that may discourage or limit individuals from becoming trained operators, technicians, and electronic experts."

Although no new Novice and Advanced licenses will be issued after the effective date of the Report and Order, the FCC does not plan to automatically upgrade any existing license privileges. The ARRL had proposed a one-time across-the-board upgrading of current Novice and Tech Plus licensees to General class, but the FCC declined to adopt the idea.

This means that current licensees will retain their current operating privileges, including access to various modes and subbands, and will be able to renew their licenses indefinitely.

Starting April 15, 2000, individuals who qualified for the Technician class license prior to March 21, 1987, will be able to upgrade to General class by providing documentary proof to a Volunteer Examiner Coordinator, paying an application fee, and completing FCC Form 605.

The FCC's decision not to automatically upgrade Novice and Tech Plus licensees means the current Novice/Tech Plus HF subbands will remain and not be "refarmed" to higher class licensees as the ARRL had proposed. The FCC said it did not refarm these subbands because there was "no consensus" within the amateur community as to what to do with them.

As it had proposed earlier, the FCC decided to lump Technician and Tech Plus licensees into a single licensee database, all designated as "Technician" licensees. Those who can document having passed the 5 WPM Morse code examination will continue to have the current Tech Plus HF privileges. "If documentation is needed to verify whether a licensee has passed a telegraphy examination, we may request the documentation from that licensee or the VECs," the FCC said.

In addition to reducing the number of license classes from six to three and eliminating the 20 and 13 WPM code tests, the FCC also will reduce the number of written examination elements from five to three, authorize Advanced Class hams to prepare and administer General class examinations, and eliminate Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES) station licenses. RACES will remain, however. "After review of the record, we conclude that we should eliminate RACES station licenses because RACES station licenses are unnecessary for amateur stations and amateur service licenses to provide emergency communications," the FCC said.

Under the new licensing scheme, there will be four examination elements. Element 1 will be the 5 WPM Morse code exam. Element 2 will be a 35-question written test to obtain a Technician license; Element 3 will be a 35-question written test to obtain a General license, and Element 4 will be a 50-question written test for the Amateur Extra license. The FCC has left it in the hands of the National Conference of VECs Question Pool Committee to determine the specific mix and makeup of written examination questions. Current Amateur Radio study materials remain valid at least until the new rules become effective in April.

The FCC's new licensing plan means someone will be able to become a ham by passing a single 35-question written examination. The plan also simplifies and shortens the upgrade path from the ground floor through Amateur Extra--especially since amateurs will only have to pass one Morse code test.

Elimination of the 13 and 20 WPM Morse requirements also means an end to physician certification waivers for applicants claiming an inability to pass the Morse code examination due to physical handicap.

## AMATEUR RESTRUCTURING CONTINUED

The effective date provides a window of upgrade opportunity for current Advanced licensees. Between now and April 15, current Advanced holders may take the existing Element 4B, a 40-question test, giving them credit for having passed the current Extra written examination. Likewise, holders of a Certificate of Successful Completion of Examination (CSCE) for Elements 3B or 4B dated on or after April 17, 1999, will be able to qualify for General or Amateur Extra respectively when the new rules go into effect on April 15, 2000.

The FCC disagreed with the League's suggestion that it undertake a restructuring of operating privileges along with licensing restructuring. "We believe that in light of ongoing discussions concerning implementation of new and more modern communications technologies within the amateur service community, we should accord the amateur service community an opportunity to complete such discussions and possibly reach a consensus regarding implementation of new technologies before we undertake a comprehensive restructuring of the amateur service operating privileges and frequencies," the FCC said in its Report and Order.

In its amendments to Part 97, the FCC's Report and Order refers to a "Club Station Call Sign Administrator," something that does not exist under the current rules and which was not explained in the R&O itself. An FCC spokesperson said the Commission plans to issue a Public Notice soon to explain the program and to solicit qualified entities to serve as call sign administrators for club station applications.

A copy of the entire Report and Order (FCC 99-412) is available at:

<http://www.arrl.org/announce/regulatory/wt98-143ro.pdf>

or at

[http://www.fcc.gov/Daily\\_Releases/Daily\\_Business/1999/db991230/fcc99412.txt](http://www.fcc.gov/Daily_Releases/Daily_Business/1999/db991230/fcc99412.txt)

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Rick Lindquist, N1RL  
ARRL Senior News Editor

## Membership Drive 1999

We would like to increase HCRA's membership 10% this year.

As an incentive to bring in more members,

For each prospective NEW member that you bring as a guest

to an HCRA meeting, you will receive

5 free tickets for that night's door prize drawing.

If the guest joins, he/she will also receive 5 free tickets.

PLEASE!!!

... - - - ...

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# Counting Snowflakes

BY  
**Eric Tuller N1OKO**

During a snow storm, please report every 2 inches of new snowfall and if an inch of snow falls in an hour time span.

Please also pass on a final report.

Report any snow / sleet / freezing rain if not in NWS forecast.

The following are a few pointers and hints for accurately measuring snowfall.

First, you will need a measuring device. A simple 12 inch plastic ruler is fine.  
(Hopefully, you will not need to use a yard stick this year!)

The next step is to find a location in which the snow is least affected by drifting.

A good place is the side of the house which is sheltered from the wind.

The last step is to simply stick the stick in the ground and take a reading. Please measure the snow to the nearest quarter of an inch.

A couple of other suggestions are to take the average of a couple of readings since Snowfall depths can vary greatly. Also, it is best to measure snow on a flat surface such as a patio or a board rather than the grass. The grassy surface can yield inaccurate readings, since it can hinder the snow from actually settling to the ground, especially if the flakes are large.

*Copied from the web from Diane Innes*

Happy holidays, de *Eric, n1qko*

MINUTES FROM THE HAMPDEN COUNTY RADIO ASSOCIATION Board of Directors Meeting, 09-Dec-1999  
Held at Irv Slitzky's, Longmeadow, MA

HCRA Officers present were: Irv Slitzky, W6IS; Jim Mullen, WA1ZUH; Greg Stoddard, N1AEH; Jordy Koltz, W1JK; and Les Prentice, K1DNX.

Irv opened the meeting by greeting all in attendance and handing out a meeting agenda.

**REPORTS:**

**President:** Irv opened the meeting. The first order of business was to review the "expired member listing" for errors and omissions. After correcting any errors, the board members present identified people who had not renewed. A list was made for each of the board members to call and inquire about renewing their HCRA membership.

**Vice President:** Not present.

**Treasurer:** Present balance, \$1785. Additional income from the auction raffle was \$65. The raffle at the Holiday Party grossed \$125, expenses were \$57, the raffle netted \$68. The Holiday Party cost \$179, \$21 under the \$200 budget.

**Secretary:** Current membership stands at 79 regular, 3 life, 1 honorary and 8 family for a total of 91. The roster was submitted and corrected. One member renewed twice and his second renewal check will be returned. A membership roster will be made available for either Zero Beat or distribution at the next regular meeting. The board agreed this roster will have members name, town and telephone number. Membership cards, roster and labels for Zero Beat will be sent to John on the December 27th.

**Newsletter:** John was unable to attend. Irv relayed his information. A copy of the by-laws and membership roster needs to be printed and made available at the next meeting. Critical dates for the next Zero Beat are December 27<sup>th</sup> for article submission and January 3rd for mailing. Just a reminder, the 2-meter net held on Tuesday nights is discontinued.

**Technical:** Jordy's position is to help any members with technical questions. If you have any problems concerning rigs, antennas, TVI etc., give him a call. He will be available for any member to contact with tech problems. And of course, DX questions are always welcome!

**Program:** Yorke was not present. Irv filled in with the following. The January speaker is still not confirmed. Larry, K1ILZ is attempting to confirm Dave, W1GCA, to speak about the French Cable Museum. Jim said he would approach a few people he knew, but could not promise anything. All members reading this are asked for any input concerning speakers they know or would like to see at HCRA meetings.

**At Large:** Les has been helping with the monthly raffle and Holiday Party. He is also a great member resource for anyone looking for help with the hobby or input of what you would like from HCRA.

**Membership:** Not present. Larry is continuing to send 10 Zero Beats to different zip codes monthly. HCRA has gained at least one new member with this program.

**Station Trustee:** Not present.

**Open Discussion:** The possibility of some type of a joint Field Day with MTARA was discussed again. General feeling is the possibility is still there, but no comments from MTARA have been received so far. Also discussed was the need for ALL HCRA members to actively participate in the club and the hobby to the best of their ability. Feel free to contact any board member with ideas about anything you would like to see happening in the HCRA.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 PM.

The next meeting of the  
Hampden County Radio Association  
Will be on Friday  
**January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2000**  
At 7:30 p.m. at the  
Feeding Hills Congregational Church  
**Doors open at 7:00 PM**

Hope to see you there!

*In case of inclement weather, tune to TV Channels 22 or 40, or on the  
146.94 and 147.105 repeaters.  
Meeting cancellation information will be given out by 6:00 PM.*

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